Amendments to the Claims:

Please add the following new claims, which correspond to claims 31-55 of the '610 patent. The claims below are similarly numbered 31-55 because the undersigned attorney is currently unaware of the highest number of any previously presented claim. The Examiner is requested to re-number the claims consistent with 37 C.F.R. 1.126 by Examiner's Amendment.

31. (new) A floor covering material comprising a PVC layer and having aggregate embedded in the material for providing surface roughness wherein the material incorporates a barrier layer of polymeric material other than PVC fused into the upper surface of the PVC layer, the aggregate being exposed at the surface of the barrier layer.

32. (new) A material according to claim 31 wherein the barrier layer is of a cured polymeric material.

33. (new) A material according to claim 31 wherein the barrier layer is of a thermoplastic material.

34. (new) A material according to claim 31 wherein the barrier layer is at least as flexible as the underlying PVC layer.

35. (new) A material according to claim 31 wherein the barrier layer is transparent or translucent.

36. (new) A material according to claim 31 wherein the polymeric material of the barrier layer provides enhanced dirt release and/or stain resistance in comparison to the PVC.

37. (new) A material according to claim 31 wherein the barrier layer comprises a polyolefin, (co-)polyester, (co-)polyamide, polyurethane, phenol formaldehyde, epoxy or acrylic polymer or a mixture thereof.

38. (new) A material according to claim 31 wherein the floor covering material has an embossed surface.

39. (new) A material according to claim 31 wherein the aggregate is quartz, corundum, and/or silicon carbide.

40. (new) A method of producing a floor covering material comprising

(a) spreading a PVC plastisol on a substrate,

(b) distributing over the surface of the plastisol a powder of a film forming, heat fusible polymeric material other than PVC and a particulate aggregate material, and

(c) effecting heating to fuse the plastisol and convert the powder into a film,

steps (b) and (c) being effected such that aggregate is exposed at the surface of the film.

41. (new) A method according to claim 40 wherein the powder is distributed over the plastisol prior to the aggregate material.

42. (new) A method according to claim 41 wherein the powder applied to the plastisol is softened prior to distribution of the aggregate.

43. (new) A method according to claim 40 wherein the powder is distributed over the plastisol simultaneously with the aggregate.

44. (new) A method according to claim 40 wherein the aggregate is distributed over the plastisol prior to the powder.

45. (new) A method according to claim 44 wherein excess powder is removed from the plastisol prior to step (c).

46. (new) A method according to claim 45 wherein excess powder is removed by suction.

47. (new) A method according to claim 40 wherein the powder is a thermoplastic material.

48. (new) A method according to claim 40 wherein the powder is of a curable resin system.

49. (new) A method according to claim 48 wherein said resin system is cured by heat and curing is effected in step (c).

50. (new) A method according to claim 48 wherein the resin system is curable by UV-radiation.

51. (new) A method according to claim 50 wherein UV curing is effected subsequent to step (c).

52. (new) A method according to claim 50 wherein the powder comprises a polyolefin, (co-)polyester, (co-)polyamide, polyurethane, phenol formaldehyde, epoxy or acrylic polymer or a mixture thereof.

53. (new) A method according to claim 50 wherein embossing is applied subsequent to step (c).

54. (new) A method according to claim 50 wherein the aggregate is quartz, corundum and/or silicon carbide.

55. (new) A method according to claim 50 wherein the powder incorporates at least one of a flow modifying agent, a flame retardant, a biocide, a gloss modifier and a matting agent.